

## Campylobacteriosis

### ❑ WHAT IS IT?

Campylobacteriosis is an infection of the intestines caused by a bacteria called *Campylobacter*. The bacteria is commonly found in the feces of infected people and animals, and food products contaminated with the bacteria during processing or preparation.

### ❑ SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of the illness develop within 1 to 10 days after swallowing the bacteria, but usually between 3 to 5 days. Infected persons may have very mild symptoms or severe gastrointestinal illness.

Symptoms usually resolve within 10 days, and may include:

- ✓ Mild to severe diarrhea (may be bloody)
- ✓ Stomach cramps
- ✓ Fever (can be high)
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Convulsions (in severe cases)

### ❑ HOW IS IT SPREAD?

*Campylobacter* bacteria leave an infected person's or animal's body in the stool. If these bacteria get into a person's mouth, the person gets sick. People can get Campylobacteriosis when they:

- ✓ Eat contaminated food, such as chicken that has been poorly cooked, cheese made from unpasteurized milk, or fruits and vegetables that have not been properly washed.
- ✓ Drink contaminated water or unpasteurized milk.
- ✓ Handle sick pets or farm animals (especially puppies and kittens with diarrhea).

### ❑ DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

- ✓ The disease is diagnosed from culturing a stool sample.
- ✓ Drink plenty of liquids (clean water, juices, and soup) to prevent dehydration (fluid loss).
- ✓ Most people get better without treatment. If the infection is severe or prolonged, an antibiotic may be prescribed.

### ❑ PREVENTION

- ✓ Wash hands thoroughly after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, before preparing or eating food and after cleaning up after sick pets.
- ✓ Wash hands after handling animals or pets (and their waste) or visiting a farm.
- ✓ Drink only pasteurized milk and eat only pasteurized milk cheeses.
- ✓ Cook all meats thoroughly, particularly chicken and pork.
- ✓ Avoid cross-contamination. Make sure that other foods, such as fruits or vegetables, do not come into contact with cutting boards or knives that have been used with raw meat or poultry.
- ✓ Disinfect food-preparation surfaces and utensils after each use, as follows:
  - Use 1 tsp liquid household bleach per gallon of water.
  - Do not rinse.
  - Let air dry.
  - Prepare the bleach solution fresh daily.

**Report all King County cases to  
Public Health by calling (206) 296-4774.**

Available in alternate formats.